

A REAL LOVE AND A FALSE

I was a coquette.

Many a lover's heart I had lacerated by refusing his offer of marriage after I had lured him on to a "declaration."

My last victim's name was James Frazer. He was a tall, awkward, homely and ungainly man, but his heart was as true as steel. I respected him highly, and felt pained when I witnessed his anguish at my rejection of him.

But the fact was, I had myself fallen in love with Elliott Tracy, a smart city man, who had been unremitting in his devotion to me. James Frazer warned me against Elliott, but I charged him with jealousy, and took his warnings as an insult. A few days later Elliott and I were engaged, and my dream of romantic love seemed to be in a fair way toward realization. I had a week of happiness. Many have not had so much in a lifetime. Many awake from the bright short dream to find themselves in life-long darkness, and bondage from which there is no escape. Thank God I was not to be so miserable as they!

There was a party on horseback winding through our grand old woods and quiet country roads. Elliott and I led the cavalcade. I rode my own beautiful Brown Bess. Elliott was mounted on the handsome black horse that had been given to him by a rich uncle. Following us were a bevy of merry girls and their cavaliers, and among them, tall, awkward and silent, rode James Frazer. His presence had marred all the pleasure of my ride, and I was glad to be in advance of them all, that I might not see him.

And so we rode on through the lovely country and I listened, well pleased, to the low but animated words of Elliott Tracy, who wished himself a knight and me a fair ladye of the olden time, that he might go forth to do battle for me and compel all men to recognize the claims of his peerless love.

Very eloquently he spoke of the inspiration of love, of the brave deeds and perilous exploits it had prompted, wishing again and again that he might thus proclaim and maintain his love before the world. It pleased me to listen to this, and to believe it sincere, though I surely had no wish to put my lover to such a test.

Suddenly a shot rang through the still woods, and a wounded bird, darting past, fluttered and fell at the feet of Brown Bess. With a bound and a spring, that nearly unseated me, she was off.

Struggling to regain my seat, I had no power to restrain her, and even as she flew the fear and madness of the moment grew upon her. I could only cling breathlessly to mane and bridle and wonder helplessly where this mad gallop was to end. She swerved from a passing wagon, and turned into a cart track that led to the river. In the sudden movement the reins had been torn from my hands, and I could not regain them.

I clung to the mane, and closed my eyes that I might not behold the fate that awaited me. How sweet was life in those precious moments which I thought my last! How all its joys, its affections, its last crowning love rose up before me! I thought of the pang that would rend Elliott's heart as he saw me lying mangled and dead, and then the thought would come that he was pursuing and trying to save me, even as he had said, at the risk of life and limb.

I remembered no more. I felt a sudden shock, a fearful rushing through the air, and knew nothing until, days afterward, I woke to a faint, weak semblance of life in my room at home.

I never saw Elliott Tracy again. The last words I ever heard from his lips were those of knightly daring. The last act of his life, in connection with mine, was to follow in the train of frightened youths who rode after me, to contemplate the disaster from afar, and as soon as he saw me lifted from the shallow bed of the river into which I had been thrown when my frightened horse stopped suddenly on its bank, to ride hastily back to the village. That evening he sent to make inquiries, and learning that I was severely but not, it was hoped, not fatally injured, he thenceforth contented himself with such tidings of my condition and improvement as could be gained from village rumors.

At last it was known that I would never recover entirely from the effects of my injury, and that very day Elliott Tracy departed suddenly from the village.

He made no attempt to see me, nor sent me any farewell. When I was more about, and beginning to see the lesson of patience and resignation that awaited me, I received from him, in which he merely presumed my own judgment, that in my altered condition, our engagement was impossible, but to satisfy his (his honor!) he was entertaining

the highest respect for me, he desired a formal renunciation of my claim.

Writing at the bottom of his letter, "Let it be as you wish," I returned it to him at once, and thus ended my brief dream of a romantic love.

I had heard ere this of Elliott Tracy's cowardly conduct on that day, and now I first bethought me to inquire who had rescued me from imminent death.

Then I learned that James Frazer, his arm already broken by the jerk with which Brown Bess tore away from him as he caught at her bridle, had ridden after me, and was the first to lift me from the water.

Many times daily he had made inquiries for me. His hand had been that sent the rare flowers that decked my room. His were the books I read in the lingering days of convalescence, and his, now, was the arm that supported me as, slowly and painfully, I paced the garden walks.

I have been his wife for many a year. I have forgotten that he is not handsome, or rather have realized that he is beautiful to me, because I see his grand and lovely spirit shining through his plain features, animating his awkward figure.

I have long since laid aside, as utterly untenable, my pet theory that beautiful spirits dwell only in lovely bodies.

It may be a providential compensation that, in denying physical perfection, the soul is not dwarfed or distorted, but shines the brighter that it is not marred by pretty vanity or love of the world's praise.

LEFT-HANDED CHILDREN

Do Not Try to Force Them to Become Right-Handed.

I have never seen anything but bad results from the attempt to train children to use the right hand instead of the left when there is a decided tendency or habit to be left-handed. Moreover, the attempt is never successful.

The best consequences are poor and are only awkward mixtures of the two forms, which yield confusions and indecisions during the entire subsequent life. One is that of a naturally left-handed friend who, by arduous and continuous training during his childhood, was compelled to write with his right hand. For all other acts he is left-handed, but he cannot use his left hand for writing. Although now past fifty he has always hated any writing, the mere act of doing so, and he cannot do any original thinking while writing. He is for this purpose compelled to rely on a stenographer, and then his ideas flow freely and rapidly. If he tries to think, plan or devise and to write at the same time, there is a positive inhibition of thought and he must make sketches, epitomes, several efforts, copyings, etc., in a painful and most unsatisfactory manner. The attempt at ambidexterity has been a life-long obstacle to him in his professional progress.

The chief centers most closely inter-related in writing and thinking are thus demonstrably better harmonized when in one side of the brain. The mechanics of neurology are plainly less difficult than could be achieved by any foolish and unsuccessful ambidexterity.—Dr. G. M. Gould in Science.

The Iroquois Theatre.
Chicago News.

Judge Dunne is quite right in declaring that the instant the proprietors of the Iroquois theatre comply with the city building department regulations as expressed in the theatre ordinance they are entitled to a permit to open their place of amusement.

Some people have a queer idea of amusement, so the word in this connection may not seem shocking to everybody.

But what human being with pity in his bosom for the sufferings of innocent victims of a terrible crime would go for amusement to a playhouse haunted by terrible memories of those hundreds who died there on a day that can never be forgotten?

A Social Rat-Killing Club.
Kansas City Journal.

The most novel social institution of Chariton county is a rat-killing club. The members meet at each other's homes at stated intervals, and kill rats to work up an appetite for the fine country dinner that follows. At the home of "Tom" Berry they killed 260 rats the other day, and a little before they killed 160 at George Polson's. The club is growing fast.

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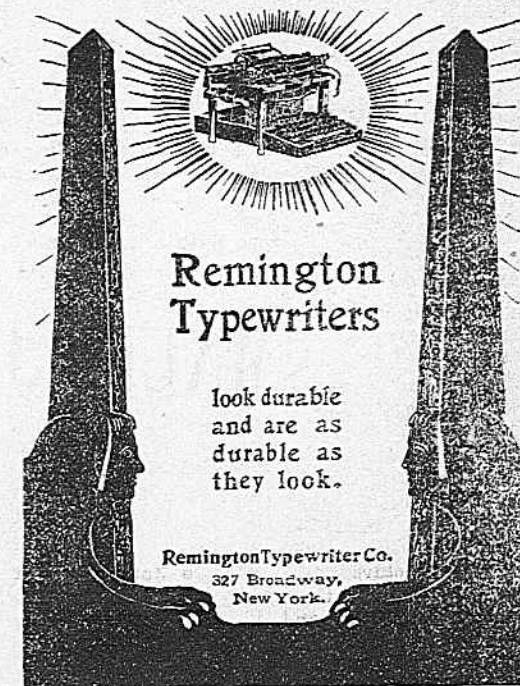
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